

WASHINGTON, DC- Congressman Peter DeFazio's (D-Springfield) effort to redirect \$8 million in funds to help the Port of Coos Bay buy the CORP rail line became final this week when the Senate passed the omnibus appropriations bill for FY2009. For decades the rail line has provided a crucial transportation connection between Coos Bay and Eugene. The week after the line closed in 2007, a Georgia-Pacific sawmill temporarily shut down, laying off 120 employees. The average shipper along the Coos Bay line now pays 10-15 percent more in shipping costs because they have to ship by truck.

"This is great news for the Port, the state and the business in southwest Oregon. I am pleased to have been able to help reallocate the funds to save the rail line," DeFazio said. "The rail line is vital to the economy of the south coast. Several major employers in the area depend on the rail line to get their goods to market. The shut down has forced businesses to incur additional transportation costs and caused the loss of hundreds of jobs to local communities."

CORP, the private company that currently owns the line, embargoed the it in September of 2007, and later sought to abandon the line altogether.

DeFazio, Chairman of the House Highways and Transit Subcommittee, originally secured the \$8 million in the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy For Users (SAFETEA-LU) to help the Port make repairs to a rail bridge on the Coos Bay Line in 2005. The Port has made enough repairs to the bridge with funding secured by DeFazio in the 1998 surface transportation bill, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, that the bridge will last another ten years so those funds can be safely reallocated to purchase the line. Combined with the \$4 million in state funding the Oregon Transportation Commission has agreed to provide and the recent loan from the Oregon Economic and Community Development Department, the Port of Coos Bay will have the funds it needs to purchase the rail line.